

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

**1. (Currently Amended)** An over-coating agent for forming fine patterns which is applied to cover a substrate having photoresist patterns thereon and allowed to shrink under heat so that the spacing between adjacent photoresist patterns is lessened, with the applied film of the over-coating agent being removed substantially completely to form fine patterns, further ~~characterized by~~ containing (a) a water-soluble polymer and (b) a water-soluble crosslinking agent ~~having at least one nitrogen atom in its structure~~which is at least one member selected from among triazines, glycolurils and ureas.

**2. (Original)** The over-coating agent for forming fine patterns according to claim 1, wherein component (a) is at least one member selected from among acrylic polymers, vinyl polymers and cellulosic polymers.

**3. (Canceled)**

**4. (Original)** The over-coating agent for forming fine patterns according to claim 1, which is an aqueous solution having a concentration of 3 - 50 mass%.

**5. (Original)** The over-coating agent for forming fine patterns according to claim 1, wherein the agent, in terms of solid matters, contains 1 - 99 mass% of component (a) and 1 - 99 mass% of component (b).

**6. (Original)** The over-coating agent for forming fine patterns according to claim 1, wherein the agent, in terms of solid matters, contains 40 - 99 mass% of component (a) and 1 - 60 mass% of component (b).

**7. (Original)** A method of forming fine patterns comprising the steps of covering a substrate having thereon photoresist patterns with the over-coating agent for forming fine patterns of claim 1, then applying heat treatment to shrink the applied over-coating agent under the action of heat so that the spacing between adjacent photoresist patterns is

lessened, and subsequently removing the applied film of the over-coating agent substantially completely.

**8. (Original)** The method of forming fine patterns according to claim 7, wherein the heat treatment is performed by heating the substrate at a temperature that does not cause thermal fluidizing of the photoresist patterns on the substrate.